



266th FINCOM Newsletter

"First in Finance Support"

15 October 2001

Volume 1, Issue 7

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266th Finance Cmd Pays Travel Card Bills

Settling your travel voucher just got easier.

Thanks to the 266th Finance Command, Army finance offices are now able to reimburse soldiers and DoD civilians for their travel as well as pay the Bank of America travel card bill. This payment process is known as split disbursement.

One of the main goals of the 266th Finance Command is convenience for the customer. This includes the Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) and paying GTCC bills using split disbursements.

Using split disbursement, you can now designate the dollar amount you owe the bank to pay your balance in full. Finance will send this amount directly to Bank of America to pay your GTCC balance. Finance will pay the difference directly into your designated bank account. Used correctly, split-disbursement eliminates the burden and cost of writing and mailing checks to the bank. While this option benefits all travelers, its major benefit is for soldiers and DoD civilians on long-term temporary duty who have to submit interim travel vouchers.

Split disbursement is especially useful for big-ticket items such as hotels, rental cars, airline tickets – they will all be paid for directly during voucher settlement. It's automated and it's fast. You will not have to worry about being on the road when the bill arrives at home or about inadvertently missing payments.

Remember, take advantage of this unique feature. Simply check the split disbursement block on your travel voucher and list the amount you want sent on your next travel voucher. Allow finance to pay your next bill for you.

EAGLS Access

Cardholders must actively pay GTCC balance in full to keep their account in good standing. Cardholders must also inform their Agency Program Coordinator (APC) of changes in their status (address changes, current contact numbers, future travel requirements, etc.).

To assist with some of these changes, cardholders can contact their APC and obtain access to the bank's Electronic Account Government Ledger System (EAGLS). Individual EAGLS access allows cardholders to access and view their accounts for the balance information, make certain changes to their accounts (address, phone number, e-mail, PIN), and dispute charges.



J DC III Version
5.10 is out.
Download the
upgrade via FTP @
CORPS2.DFAS.
MIL.

Special points of interest:

- Travel Card Changes
- Stop FSSA
- SRB Multipliers

Family Service Member's Group Life Insurance (FSGLI)

Family SGLI will begin November 1, 2001. Some of the basic rules that sites need to be aware of are:

- The Family SGLI program is primarily a Personnel driven program similar to regular SGLI.
- Soldiers are not eligible for this program if they are not enrolled in the regular SGLI program.
- Spouse coverage cannot exceed soldiers' regular coverage and cost is based on spouse's age with the maximum coverage being \$100,000.
- There is no clause excluding payment of benefits due to preexisting medical conditions for those enrolled as of 1 November 01.
- Children coverage is automatic (\$10,000 per child) and at no cost to the soldier. Soldiers cannot decline to have their children covered.
- Soldiers who **DO NOT** want coverage or want a reduced amount **MUST** complete a SGLV Form 8286A, Family Election Coverage (SGLI), **PRIOR** to 1 November 2001 and submit this election to their servicing personnel detachment.
- All married soldiers who have a valid SGLI option will **automatically** be enrolled for the maximum coverage **unless**, a SGLV Form 8286A is completed and the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) is updated.
- An allotment deduction (active component) and a DS03 debt (reserve component) will be used to make collections for Family SGLI.
- Field sites **WILL NOT** be allowed to start, stop, or change these deductions. **ALL** starts, stops, changes to Family SGLI **must** come through the DEERS until changes can be made within DJMS.
- Soldiers who decline or request a lesser amount of coverage during the initial period who later decide they want coverage or want to increase coverage will be required to complete a SGLV Form 8285A, Request for Family Coverage for Spouse (SGLI).
- **Only** the Central Site will be authorized to make refunds for erroneous deductions of Family SGLI. Field Sites **will** be required to review SGLV Form 8286A, a copy of the DEERS input screen, and fax them to central site.
- Forms can be downloaded from the following web site: [HTTP://WWW.INSURANCE.VA.GOV/](http://WWW.INSURANCE.VA.GOV/)

Special Leave Accrual (SLA)

MILPER Message **01-263** Special Leave Accrual (SLA) was released on September 27, 2001.

This message rescinded MILPER message 01-258, same subject, dated September 19, 2001 which limited who could request SLA and required Commander/MACOM approval. Message 01-263 authorized SLA for **ALL** military members and removed the requirement for approved requests to be faxed to DFAS.

The System Procedures Office (SPO) is currently developing their procedures and will release any instructions to the field via the MP.AIG bulletin board. Sites can inform their customers that adjustments to their leave bank will be processed sometime in the **November 2001** processing month and that the maximum amount of leave that could be carried over from **FY01** will be **80** days. The earliest those corrections will be posted to the Leave and Earnings statements will be November 2001.

Special Leave Accrual (SLA)

Q: I keep hearing people talk about SLA. What is SLA and how does it apply to me?

A: Special Leave Accrual is a program that was developed to assist soldiers who were unable to take leave because of operational requirements. Soldiers deployed to a contingency operations, such as Operation Joint Endeavor/Forge, or who support the operation, may be eligible to carry forward leave that they would normally lose. Under the provisions of AR 600-8-10 (Leave and Passes), soldiers may apply through their chain of command, and if approved, have the lost leave returned to their leave balances. This program allows soldiers with approved SLA to carry forward up to 90 days of accrued leave into the next fiscal year. Any leave beyond 90 days is lost. Remember, the intent of SLA is to provide relief to soldiers who are not allowed leave when undergoing lengthy deployments or during periods of hostility.

Q: What are the different types of SLA?

A: There are three different categories of SLA.

Category I applies to soldiers who served in an area qualifying for Hostile Fire Pay (HFP) or Imminent Danger Pay (IDP) for at least 120 days during the fiscal year. Soldiers are allowed to take rest and recuperation leave during the 120 days and still qualify under Category I.

Category II includes soldiers who served in an area entitling them to HFP or IDP less than 120 continuous days, or who were deployed for any length of time in a non-HFP or IDP area (e.g. Hungary).

Category III applies to soldiers who did not deploy, but were unable to take all leave in excess of 60 days due to support of an operation during the fiscal year.

Q: How long do I have to use SLA?

A: If you deployed to an area qualifying for HFP or IDP, you have up to three fiscal years to use it. Otherwise, you must use your SLA within one fiscal year of approval.

Q: Can I sell my SLA?

A: No, SLA must be used and cannot be sold. If you are departing from the service, you must use your SLA prior to separation.

Q: How do I apply for SLA if I qualify?

A: You should use your chain of command to request approval. Your unit cannot submit requests for SLA until receipt of your October Leave and Earnings Statement (LES). Your unit's PAC is able to answer any questions concerning SLA. Your unit's request must be based on information in the Leave Lost block on your October LES and not the Leave Use/Lose block information.

The following examples do not qualify for SLA approval:

- Permanent Change of Station (PCS)
- Temporary Duty (TDY)
- Permissive TDY
- Hospitalization
- Assignment, detail, or TDY to special duty or projects, study groups, or similar duty
- Participation in scheduled training exercises
- Participation in sporting activities

Q: How is leave charged, SLA and ordinary?

A: All leave is charged using a Last In, First Out (LIFO) method. This means that the most current days of leave earned are the days charged against as leave is taken.

Q: What happens to my SLA at the end of the year?

A: SLA days will not automatically carry forward with the remainder of your leave. On 1 Oct of the new fiscal year, any leave over 60 days will be lost. Your "lost" SLA days must be re-credited to your leave balance account. To have these days re-credited to your account, you need to go to your local finance office.

Order for
Charging Leave

Current, Earned
Leave



Special Leave
Accrual



Leave Earned in
Past Fiscal
Years (60 days)

Q: How do I know when I have used all of my SLA days?

A: Once your leave balance is reduced to less than 60 days, you will have used up all of your SLA.

Q: I was deployed for 8 months and lost 28 days of leave. How many SLA days am I eligible for?

A: 20 days. Although your LES indicates that you lost 28 days of leave, SLA is only applied to the duration of deployment. Therefore, if you were deployed for 8 months, you only earned 20 days of SLA (8 months x 2.5 days earned per month = 20 days). The other 8 days lost (28 days less 20 days earned while deployed) are lost for good.

Q: I was deployed and approved for SLA. How many years do I have to have to use my SLA?

A: Remember, if you are Category I, you have three fiscal years (1 Oct XX through 30 Sep YY) to use the SLA once it has been approved. Otherwise, you have one fiscal year after approval of your SLA. However, there are some rules that apply. Accrued SLA must be used before the end of the third fiscal year after the qualifying fiscal year. For example, if you qualified for SLA at the end of September 2000 (FY 00), you have until end of FY 03 (30 Sep 03) to use the special leave. Any leave you do not use by 30 Sep 03 will be lost and cannot be recovered.

Q: If I take 30 days or less of leave within any fiscal year, do I still have all of my SLA leave?

A: It depends. Remember, leave is charged using LIFO. In order to reduce your SLA, you must take leave in excess of the days earned during the current fiscal year.

In the following examples, the soldier was deployed for 12 months and therefore approved for 30 days of SLA. Below is a simplified example where you can see the impact of taking leave at various times of the year.

| SLA Computation | Leave From 1-30 Oct XX | Leave From 1-30 Mar XX | Leave From 1-30 Sep XX |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Balance- 1 Oct XX (30 days SLA) | 90 | 90 | 90 |
| Leave Taken | (2.5 days earned) 30 | (15 days earned) 30 | (30 days earned) 30 |
| Leave Balance- 30 Sep XX | 90 | 90 | 90 |
| "Use or lose" leave | 27.5 | 15 | 0 |
| SLA Balance- 30 Sep XX | 2.5 | 15 | 30 |
| Balance- 1 Oct YY (Bal Fwd) | 62.5 | 75 | 90 |

Q: I still do not understand how SLA works. Can you give a more detailed example for me to use?

A: Sure. The following example shows a soldier's leave balances as leave is earned and taken over the three fiscal years allowed for using SLA. This example is similar to "real-world" information.

| | <u>Leave Balance</u> | <u>SLA Balance</u> |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|
| Leave balance 1 Oct 96 (FY 97) | 47.0 | 0.0 |
| Leave earned prior to deployment (Oct 96) | 2.5 | |
| A soldier deployed Nov 96 through Aug 97 (10 months) | <u>25.0</u> | |
| Leave balance upon redeployment | 74.5 | |
| Leave earned after deployment | 2.5 | |
| Leave taken during fiscal year (7 days in Sep 97) | <u>(7.0)</u> | |
| Balance at the end of FY 97 (30 Sep 97) | 70.0 | 10.0 |

Note: 10 days of leave will be lost at the start of the next fiscal year (1 Oct 97). These 10 days will be applied as SLA. Remember, only the portion that exceeds 60 days (and therefore "lost leave") applies as SLA.

| | | |
|--|--------------|------|
| Leave balance 1 Oct 97 (FY 98) with approved SLA | 70.0 | 10.0 |
| Leave earned through Jan 98 | 10.0 | |
| Leave taken during fiscal year (15 Jan 98) | <u>(5.0)</u> | |
| Balance after taking leave | 75.0 | |
| Remaining leave earned during FY 98 (Feb-Sep) | <u>20.0</u> | |
| Balance at the end of FY 98 (30 Sep 98) | 95.0 | 10.0 |

Note: 25 days of the most current, earned leave is now lost. The 10 SLA days still apply as SLA and must be re-credited to the next fiscal year's beginning leave balance.

| | | |
|---|---------------|--------------|
| Leave balance 1 Oct 98 (FY 99) | 70.0 | 10.0 |
| Leave earned through Feb 99 | 12.5 | |
| Leave taken during fiscal year (1 Mar 99) | <u>(15.0)</u> | <u>(2.5)</u> |
| Balance after taking leave | 67.5 | |
| Remaining leave earned during FY 99 (Mar-Sep) | <u>17.5</u> | |
| Balance at the end of FY 99 (30 Sep 99) | 85.0 | 7.5 |

Note: 12.5 days are charged against the current fiscal year and 2.5 days are charged against SLA for the 15 days of leave taken. The remaining SLA balance is 7.5 days. Remember, you must see the finance office and have these days re-credited to the next fiscal year's beginning leave balance.

| | | |
|---|---------------|-----|
| Leave balance 1 Oct 99 (FY 00) | 67.5 | 7.5 |
| Leave earned through Jun 00 | 22.5 | |
| Leave taken during fiscal year (1 Jul 00) | <u>(20.0)</u> | |
| Balance after taking leave | 70.0 | |
| Remaining leave earned during FY 00 (Jul-Sep) | <u>7.5</u> | |
| Balance at the end of FY 00 (30 Sep 00) | 77.5 | 7.5 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------|-----|
| Leave balance 1 Oct 00 (FY 01) | 60.0 | 0.0 |
|--------------------------------|------|-----|

Note: October 2000 begins the fourth fiscal year since SLA approval so the entitlement to SLA ends. The remaining 7.5 days of SLA and 10 days of ordinary leave were lost when the third fiscal year ended.

Pay Inquiries and Customer Service

Customers have several options to handle pay inquiries. They can visit their local finance office or they can visit the servicing finance battalion's web page and submit a pay inquiry electronically. If neither of those methods work, they can contact the servicing finance battalion commander (Cdr), executive officer (XO), or command sergeant major (CSM).

The 266th Finance Command is here to support the servicing finance battalions while also acting as the USAREUR Staff Finance and Accounting Office. The FINCOM is the liaison between DFAS and the Per Diem Committee. Customers should allow USAREUR finance elements to address problems rather than contacting DFAS or the Per Diem Committee directly.

Each finance battalion has a web site with useful information and the ability to address pay inquiries electronically. The 266th FINCOM web site also provides a wealth of finance information as well as links to the finance battalions.

Access USAREUR finance home pages at:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 8th Finance Battalion | http://www.8fb.baumholder.army.mil/ |
| 39th Finance Battalion | http://www.39fb.hanau.army.mil/ |
| 106th Finance Battalion | http://www.106fb.wuerzburg.army.mil/ |
| 208th Finance Battalion | http://www.208fb.mannheim.army.mil/ |
| 266th Finance Command | http://www.266fc.hqusareur.army.mil/ |

Points of Contact

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
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| CSM Robert Lautenschlager | 322--8108 |
| LTC Francis Machina | 351-4291 |
| CSM Martin Torres | 351-4327 |
| LTC Stephen Riviere | 384-6901 |
| CSM Daniel Schorn | 384-6904 |
| COL Belinda Pinckney | 379-5101 |
| LTC Brooke Myers | 379-5107 |
| CSM Pauline Cunningham | 379-5103 |

Other Useful References

The Joint Federal Travel Regulations can be accessed at <http://www.dtic.mil/perdiem/>

Financial Management Regulations can be accessed at <http://www.dtic.mil/comptroller/fmr/index.html>

Military pay and travel messages can be accessed at <https://dfas4dod.dfas.mil/CENTERS/DFASIN/LIBRARY/>

Retirement Services can be accessed at <http://www.odcsper.army.mil/rso>

Newsletter Point of Contact

Questions or comments regarding the contents of this newsletter should be directed to CPT Sean J. Ryan, DSN 379-5175. You can also e-mail your questions or comments to: whitesa@266fc.heidelberg.army.mil.

Finance and Accounting Policy Directorate POCs

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Finance Policy | 379-5174 |
| Military Pay Policy | 379-5162 |
| Travel Policy..... | 379-5166 |
| Reserve Component Pay Policy..... | 379-5162 |
| Disbursing Policy..... | 379-5169 |
| Banking Policy..... | 379-5167 |
| Accounting Policy | 379-7770 |
| Answering Machine..... | 379-6122 |